

every complainant had the means of redress; and here again he gave not only the precept but the example also, for he was always a patient and an honest arbiter upon every question which came before him, and this chiefly for the poorer classes, who generally received from the other courts more law than justice.

If the merits of Alfred rested solely upon the judicial reforms which he introduced, they are sufficient to claim for him the lasting gratitude of posterity. Not having, ourselves, felt the miseries which arbitrary laws create, we can form but a faint idea of the boon which he conferred on his people by his legislative measures.

His visits to Rome in his youth had, undoubtedly, been attended with many advantages. That once "mistress of the world," although then disrobed of much of her former splendor, retained sufficient of the majestic grandeur of her buildings to have impressed on his mind a striking contrast to the mud huts of his Saxon countrymen. He had seen the stately Pantheon and the Forum, and though he couldn't carry their splendor to England, yet he was determined to carry their comforts there. As in the case of his scholars, he was forced to look abroad for workmen capable of carrying this design into practice; and having obtained some, he caused a number of buildings to be erected after his own designs, of a style and magnitude superior to any ever before reared on the shores of England.

Sea affairs and geography also occupied a considerable portion of his attention. Travellers and navigators were frequently invited to his court; from them he obtained descriptions of the countries which they had explored, or which were little known. In the translation which he made of the historical work of Orosius, he has added a great deal of geographical information, especially regarding Germany. His embassy to India at that time could only have been planned by a mind possessing a very uncommon amount of that branch of knowledge. But how little could he have imagined, even in the loftiest flight of his imagination, that that luxurious country, from which he was ordering a few gems and spices, would one day become a dependency, or that England's Flag would ever wave over her lofty mountains and her fertile plains.

We have contemplated Alfred in the camp, in the halls of justice, and in his public conduct—we have viewed him as a student, as a man of letters, and as a prince; let us now proceed to look on him as he is displayed to us in his private character. He is there distinguished by that noble bearing, judgment, kindness, and

care which marked him in his public life. As a parent, he was every thing that a parent should be. He had his family instructed in all the learning which his labours had brought to the country—he watched over them with the fondest eye, and he benefitted them by the wisdom of his counsel. He enjoyed, too, for this paternal care a luxury which every parent can appreciate, but which few, perhaps, enjoy—he saw a family surrounding him, dutiful and affectionate, whose company and attention were a constant source of solace to him in his old age.

Like all men, he possessed the passions and frailties of mortality; but to check their growth, and to subdue their degrading tendencies, he had frequent resource to the never-failing aid of religion. Asser mentions, says Mr. Turner, that he used to get up at the first dawn of day, and hurry away privately to church; there he would pour forth his troubles and desires—there he would seek from the Giver of all Good that moral power which He alone can bestow.

His wealth, instead of being hoarded up or squandered among the members of his family, he devoted, with his time and talents, to carry out the interests of his country. He divided his revenue into two portions, which were again subdivided each for a particular object. A sixth of one of those portions was set apart for his warriors and attendants, another to his workmen and architects; another sixth he appropriated to foreigners of learning who waited upon him, each according to his worthiness and need.

One fourth of the other half of his income he devoted to the poor, and a similar portion was given for the maintenance of two monasteries he had built; an eighth was for the schools he had founded; another eighth among the different monasteries in his country; and whenever his means permitted, he extended his munificence to those of Wales, Cornwall, Ireland, Bretagne, and of France. He is an example for some of our wealthy men to study. Had we but a few of such Alfreds, how much would be mitigated of the miseries and want which surround us!

It may have occasioned surprise how Alfred could have possibly attended to all the duties which we have said he performed. This was the secret of his success; he performed his immense amount of labour by a scrupulous regard after time, by a strict care, that not one moment should be uselessly spent. Yes; his life furnishes a glorious example of what may be done within the short period of a man's existence, when every moment is made "to pay its worth." We are told that he divided his days into three parts: eight hours